



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



CELL PHONE FOR SOLDIERS

Yes, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is still partnering with "Cell Phones for Soldiers" to collect gently used cell phones you no longer need. Both the Sioux Falls and Fort Meade facilities sponsor this program.

Donating gently-used mobile phones is simple and FREE! Every phone donated assists "Cell Phones for Soldiers" in its mission to provide cost-free communication services to active-duty military members and assist veterans as they transition into post-combat life.

Donated cell phones are sold to recycling partner, Mindful eCycling. The money received from recycling cell phones is used to purchase calling cards and other communication tools for active-duty military members and to assist veterans as they transition into post-combat life.

Batteries, chargers and accessories are accepted but not required.

Before recycling your phone, terminate your service. Clear the phone's memory of contacts and other stored information. One way to learn how to do this is by going to www.recyclewirelessphones.com.



Inside this issue:

Sexual Assault Awareness Month	2
Veterans Benefit Fair	3
2012 Efficiency in Maintenance Award	3
VA Budget	4-5
Month of Military Child	6
Upcoming Events	7



COMMUNITY COALITION COMES TOGETHER FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Working Against Violence, Inc. (WAVI) hosted a press conference at their headquarters in downtown Rapid City last Tuesday to recognize April as national Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and to proclaim it in the community. The goal of SAAM is to raise public awareness about sexual violence and to educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence. The press conference included a coalition of organizations that have come together to help combat sexual assaults by educating the community and providing resources for victims.

Several speakers at the event included Rapid City Mayor, Sam Kookier, Karl Jegeris, assistant chief of police for Rapid City, and Teresa Forbes, South Dakota National Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response coordinator. The event was also attended by representatives from South Dakota's congressional delegates, members of the South Dakota National Guard and Ellsworth Air Force Base. Mayor Kookier read a proclamation declaring April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Rapid City. "One out of every three girls and one out of every six boys is sexually abused before the age of 18," said Kookier. "WAVI promotes services for survivors of sexual violence, advocacy, training, counseling and education."

"Like WAVI, our efforts are stepped up during this recognition month, but the work goes on every day through the advocacy and support of survivors and the very challenging work of shifting attitudes to fully embrace victim support and offender accountability," said Forbes.

The coalition of resources exists in the Rapid City area to meet the needs of the community. According to Mayor Kookier, rape is the most under-reported crime.

The South Dakota National Guard maintains connections with WAVI in Rapid City as a resource for members of the National Guard who become victims of violence. "We maintain a connection with victim resources in every community in the state in order to be a bridge for our service members to reach those resources," said Forbes.

The coalition is a partnership between WAVI, the city of Rapid City, local law enforcement agencies, the South Dakota National Guard, Ellsworth Air Force Base, Rapid City Regional Hospital and other organizations. Forbes is also a member of the Rapid City area Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). The primary functions of a SART are to improve victim care by connecting them to resources and providing a sense of safety, as well as helping to assure the accountability of offenders. The team includes members of the WAVI staff as well as local medical and mental health providers and forensic professionals.

WAVI is the coordinating entity of the area SART. The staff of WAVI also tends to take the lead promoting awareness and coordinating outreach events in the greater Rapid City area.

"This month provides an opportunity for us to speak with one voice, loud and clear in saying, 'No More,'" said Forbes. "Today, we'll remind this community, our state, and nation that each and every one of us has value and no one deserves to be stripped of their dignity by any form of sexual violence."



VETERANS BENEFITS FAIR AT CBOC

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System welcomes all veterans and their families to an open house and Veterans Benefits Fair at the Aberdeen VA outpatient clinic April 25, 2013. This event will take place at 2301 8th Avenue NE, Suite 225 from 4:00-7:00 PM.

A special invitation is extended to veterans who currently do not use VA services. VA staff will explain VA eligibility and health care. In addition, VA Regional Office staff will also be there to discuss compensation benefits, including those for veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. Health screenings, tours of the clinic, and refreshments will be available. To assist in applying for benefits, veterans should bring copies of their discharge papers (DD214) and their last income tax Form 1040. Questions, please call the clinic at 605-229-3500.

CSMS#2 RECEIVES 2012 EFFICIENCY IN MAINTENANCE AWARD

The Combined Support Maintenance Shop #2 (CSMS) facility and personnel in Rapid City were the state recipients of the Efficiency in Maintenance Award for training year 2012. The Efficiency in Maintenance Award program was established in 1996 by the Chief of National Guard Bureau (NGB) to recognize excellence in shop maintenance. One maintenance shop is selected each year by the state maintenance manager after compiling data on all four Field Maintenance Shops, both Combined Support Maintenance Shops, and the UTES.

Criteria to meet the highest degree of efficiency in maintenance each training year includes maintenance of material and equipment, performance measures, innovations, evaluations, personnel responsibilities, readiness, safety of personnel, environmental and HAZMAT responsibilities, physical security, overall shop operations, CSDP, quarterly backlog reports and continuous improvements.

"This award is a testament to hard work and attention to detail the maintenance team at the CSMS #2 has exhibited," said Col. James Webster, SDARNG deputy chief of staff-logistics.

Webster said he was extremely proud to present the Efficiency in Maintenance Award to the CSMS #2 for the second time in three years. Webster also said CSMS #2 employees take pride in their work, ensuring all equipment is maintained, safe, and ready for operators to accomplish any mission.



CARE AND BENEFITS FOR VETERANS STRENGTHENED BY \$153 BILLION VA BUDGET

Continuing the transformation of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) into a 21st century organization, the President has proposed a \$152.7 billion budget, a 10.2 percent increase over Fiscal Year 2013, that will support the VA's goals to expand access to health care and other benefits, eliminate the disability claims backlog, and end homelessness among veterans. The budget includes \$66.5 billion in discretionary spending, largely for healthcare, and \$86.1 billion for mandatory programs – mostly disability compensation and pensions for veterans.

"This budget will have a positive impact on the lives of veterans, their families and survivors for generations to come," said U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "The President believes in veterans and their families and believes in providing them the care and benefits they've earned and deserve."

The \$66.5 billion total in discretionary spending includes approximately \$3.1 billion in collections from health insurers and veteran copayments in addition to the \$63.5 billion in discretionary funding announced last week.

"The VA's commitment to veterans spans generations," Shinseki added. "From the men and women of 'the greatest generation' to the veterans who have returned from Iraq and those returning from Afghanistan, the VA will make sure our benefits are useful and accessible."

The VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the country with nearly nine million enrollees; the eighth largest life insurance program; monthly disability pay, pensions and survivors payments to more than four million people; education assistance to one million students; mortgage guarantees to 1.5 million homeowners; and the largest cemetery system in the nation.

Here are highlights from the President's 2014 budget request for the VA.

With a medical care budget of \$54.6 billion, the VA is positioned to provide care to 6.5 million veterans in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. The patient total includes 675,000 people whose military service began after Sept. 11, 2001.

Major spending categories within the health care budget are:

- ♦ \$6.9 billion for mental health;
- ♦ \$4.1 billion for health care for Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn;
- ♦ \$2.5 billion for prosthetics;
- ♦ \$601 million for spinal cord injuries;
- ♦ \$246 million for traumatic brain injuries;
- ♦ \$230 million for readjustment counseling; and
- ♦ \$7.6 billion for long-term care.

The President's proposed budget would ensure that care and other benefits are available to veterans when and where they need them. Among the programs that will expand access under the proposed budget are:

- ♦ \$460 million in home telehealth funding, which helps patients monitor chronic health care problems through innovative uses of the telephone, a 4.4 percent increase over the current year;
- ♦ \$422 million for women-specific medical care, an increase of nearly 14 percent over the present level;
- ♦ \$799 million for the activation of new and enhanced health care facilities;
- ♦ \$16 million for the construction of three new national cemeteries; and
- ♦ \$8.8 million for "VetSuccess on Campus" at 84 facilities, a program that helps Veterans transition to college life.

VA BUDGET (CONTINUED)

The President's proposed budget provides for full implementation of the VA's robust Transformation Plan – a series of people, process and technology initiatives – in FY14. This plan will systematically reduce the backlog and reach Shinseki's 2015 goal - to eliminate the claims backlog and process all claims within 125 days with 98 percent accuracy.

Major transformation initiatives in the budget proposal invest \$291 million to bring leading-edge technology to the claims backlog, including:

- ♦ \$136 million for Veterans Claims Intake Program (VCIP); and
- ♦ \$155 million for the next generation of the electronic claims processing system Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS).

A major strategic goal for the Department is to end homelessness among veterans in 2015. The budget request targets \$1.4 billion for programs to prevent or reduce homelessness, which includes:

- ♦ \$300 million for Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) to promote housing stability;
- ♦ \$278 million for the HUD-VASH program wherein the VA provides case management services for at-risk veterans and their families and HUD provides permanent housing through its Housing Choice Voucher program; and
- ♦ \$250 million in grant and per diem payments that support temporary housing provided by community-based organizations.

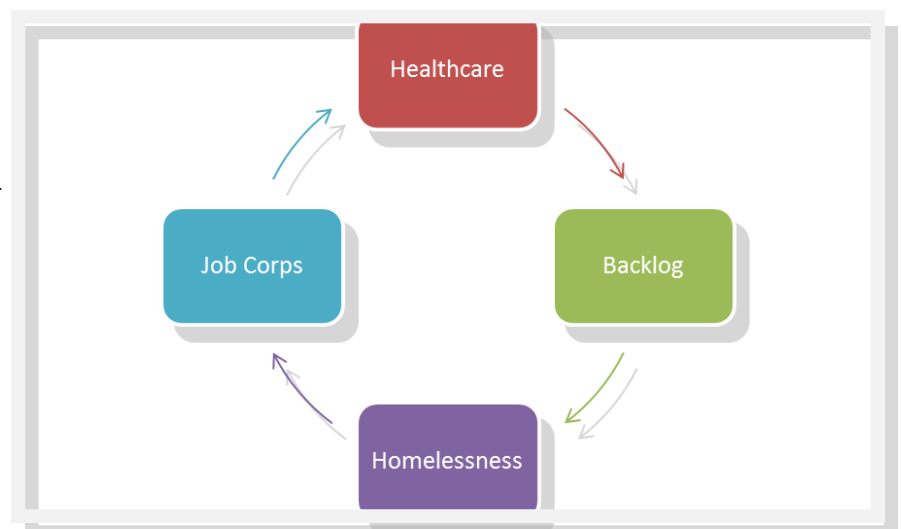
Too many veterans take off their uniforms only to join the ranks of the unemployed. In March, 2013, about 783,000 veterans were unemployed, a figure that includes 207,000 unemployed Post-9/11 Veterans.

This budget proposes a Veterans Job Corps, focused on investing in veterans' skills and experience, putting tens of thousands of veterans into civilian jobs. Budget features of this initiative include:

- ♦ \$1 billion in mandatory funds to help unemployed veterans;
- ♦ A target of putting 20,000 veterans to work within the next five years in conservation, law enforcement and infrastructure jobs on public lands;
- ♦ Developing back-to-work programs for veterans with other federal agencies, including the departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Army Corps of Engineers; and
- ♦ Supporting job-producing projects with contracts and grants with non-federal organizations, such as states, nonprofits and private businesses.

Other features of the administration's FY 2014 budget request for the department are:

- ♦ \$250 million to administer the VA-run system of national cemeteries;
- ♦ \$3.7 billion for information technology; and
- ♦ \$1.2 billion in construction, cemetery grants and extended care grants.



MONTH OF MILITARY CHILD BEING CELEBRATED THROUGHOUT SOUTH DAKOTA

April marks the nation's "Month of the Military Child," a time to honor all military children in our communities, especially those who have been impacted by a deployment of a loved one. Gov. Dennis Daugaard has also signed an executive proclamation proclaiming April as the Month of the Military Child here in our state. In tribute, South Dakota's Operation: Military Kids (OMK) Program, part of the 4-H Youth Development program of SDSU Cooperative Extension, is inviting everyone to join in and be part of the "Purple Up! For Military Kids Day," being held on Friday, April 12.

South Dakota communities are being encouraged to wear purple on that date, as a tangible way to show their support and thanks to all military children for their strength and sacrifices. Additionally, many South Dakota communities, businesses, and organizations are celebrating throughout the month with a variety of activities and promotional events to support the 7,400 military kids across the state.

According to Sheila Snyder, OMK state coordinator, purple is the color that symbolizes all branches of the military, a combination of Army green, Coast Guard blue, Air Force blue, Marine red and Navy blue. OMK hopes everyone will take this opportunity to appreciate and celebrate these young heroes and make it possible for military kids to visually witness the support of their community.

OMK is an ongoing, dynamic program to support and promote the children of deployed military service professionals. OMK is a collaborative effort between the U.S. Army, South Dakota 4-H, American Legion, and Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Its purpose is to provide local community support for the children of service women and men from South Dakota. The South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service administers the program and its offices are located at South Dakota State University's West River Agricultural Center in Rapid. Here is a list of upcoming events to celebrate and honor our military children:

April 12, Statewide: "Purple UP! For Military Kids Day"

April 12, Rapid City (9 a.m.): Rapid City Mayor's Office Proclamation announcing April as the Month of the Military Child.

April 12, Custer: The local Extension agent, Brad Keizer, and Custer Library, will be hosting an Operation Military Kids Story-time. They will make paper hugs to send (along with chocolate kisses) to the dad of the preschooler. They also plan to allow the kids to sample some (MREs).

April 12, Sioux Falls: Military Youth Night at the Stampede – Purple Up! The SDNG Child & Youth Program, partnered with the East River OMK Team, will also be providing pre-game activities at the Sioux Falls National Guard Armory. Bring your families to 801 W. National Guard Dr. and enjoy snacks, networking and participate in creating a sign for the game. Materials for making signs for the Stampede game will be provided at the social. Tailgating food and snacks will also be provided. The pre-game social will begin at 5:30 p.m. and conclude at 6:30 p.m., to give families enough time to get over to the game.

April 13, Rapid City (1:30-3:30 p.m.): Free Ice Skating for all military children and families at the Roosevelt Park Ice Arena, 235 Waterloo St., sponsored by the SDNG Child & Youth Program and OMK.

April 15, Sioux Falls (9-10 p.m.): Story Time at Lutheran Social Services Early Childhood Center on 49th Street; Share experiences in the military and read a story to the class.

April 20, Rapid City (10 a.m.): "The Lorax" Free Movie showing for military kids and their families at the Elks Theatre, 512 6th St., sponsored by the SDNG Child & Youth Program.

Upcoming Events

- Apr. 12—Purple Up
 Apr. 18—Operation Black Hills Cabin Open House—Custer 1:00 pm
 Apr. 19-21—VABHHCS Women Veterans Retreat—Ft. Meade VA Medical Center
 Apr. 25—Open House—Aberdeen CBOC—4:00-7:00 pm
 May 2—Open House—Watertown CBOC—4:00—7:00 pm
 May 3-5—DAV State Convention—The Lodge—Deadwood
 May 11—Yellow Ribbon for the 935th—Rapid City
 May 15—Sioux Falls Vets Center Open House—3200 W. 49th Street—11:00 am—2:00 pm.
 May 19—Yellow Ribbon for the 927th—Sioux Falls
 May 21—SDDVA Spring Mini Conference—Sturgis Veterans Club (868 Main Street) - 10:00 am
 May 22—SDDVA Spring Mini Conference—Pierre American Legion (520 S. Pierre Street) - 10:00 am
 May 23—SDDVA Spring Mini Conference—Brookings City/County Bldg (520 3rd Street) - 10:00 am
 May 27—MJFSVH Groundbreaking Ceremony—1:00 pm
 Jun. 6-9—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota Hotel/Conference Center—Rapid City
 Jul. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
 Jul. 26—Korean War Commemoration Display—SDNG Museum—Pierre
 Jul. 27 Korean War Wreath Laying Ceremony at the SD State Capitol—Pierre
 Aug. 24-25—Freedom Bird 2013—W. H. Lyon Fairgrounds—Sioux Falls 10:00 am—5:00 pm
 Oct. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
 Dec. 15—Wreaths Across America Ceremony—Black Hills National Cemetery—10:00 am



Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

IT'S YOUR CALL

Confidential help for
Veterans and their families

To talk to the VA BHHCS
Suicide Prevention Coordinator
call 605-347-2511 x 7087



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
 South Dakota Department of the Military
 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
 Soldiers and Sailors Building
 425 E Capitol Avenue
 Pierre, SD 57501
 Phone: 605-773-8242
 E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us
 Web site: <http://mva.sd.gov>

